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Devoted to News, Politics, Intelligence, and the Improvement of the State and Country.

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## A THRILLING NARRATIVE.

In the fall of 1850, I was traveling eastward in a stage coach from Pittsburgh over the mountains. My fellow-travelers were two gentlemen and a lady. The oldest gentleman's appearance interested me exceedingly. In years he seemed about fifty, in air and manner, he was calm, dignified and polished, and the contour of his features was singularly intellectual. He conversed freely on different topics, until the road became more abrupt and precipitous; but on my directing his attention to the great altitude of a precipice, on the verge of which our coach wheels were leisurely rolling, there came a marked change on his countenance. His eyes, lately filled with the light of intelligence, became wild, restless and anxious—the mouth twitched spasmodically, and the forehead was beaded with a cold perspiration. With a sharp, convulsive shudder, he turned his gaze from the giddy height, and clutching my arm tightly with both hands, he clung to me like a drowning man.

"Use this cologne," said the lady, with the instinctive goodness of her sex.

I sprinkled a little on his face, and he became more composed; but it was not until we had entirely traversed the mountain, and descended into the country beyond, that his fine features relaxed from their perturbed look, and assumed the placid, quiet dignity that I had at first noticed.

"I owe an apology to that lady," said he, with a bland smile and a gentle inclination of the head to our fair companion, "and some explanation, and to my fellow-traveler also; and perhaps I cannot better acquit myself of the double debt than by recounting the cause of my recent agitation."

"It may pain your feelings," delicately urged the lady.

"On the contrary, it will relieve them," was the respectful reply.

Having signified our several desires to hear more, the traveler thus proceeded:

"At the age of 18, I was light of foot, and I fear (he smiled) light of head.  
A fine property on the banks of the Ohio acknowledged me sole owner. I was hastening home to enjoy it, and delighted to get free from college life. The month was October, the air bracing, and the mode of conveyance, a stage like this, only more cumbersome. The other passengers were few—only three in all, one old gray-headed planter of Louisiana, his daughter, a bewitching creature, about seventeen, and his son about ten years of age.

They were just returning from France, of which country the young lady discoursed in terms so eloquent as to absorb my entire attention.

The father was taciturn, but the daughter was vivacious by nature, and we soon became so mutually pleased with each other that it was not until a sudden flash of lightning and a heavy dash of rain against the windows excited an exclamation from my companion, that I knew how the night passed. Presently there came a low rumbling sound, and then several tremendous peals of thunder, accompanied by successive flashes of lightning. The rain descended in torrents and an angry wind began to howl and moan through the forest trees.

I looked from the window of our vehicle. The night was dark as ebony, but the lightning showed the danger of our road. We were on the edge of a frightful precipice. I could see at intervals huge, jutting rocks far away down its side, and the sight made me solicitous for my fair companion. I thought of the mere hair breadths that were between us and eternity; a single little rock in the track of our coach wheels, a tiny billet of wood, a stray root of a tempest torn tree, a restive horse or a careless driver, any of these might hurl us from our sublimity existence with the speed of thought.

"Tis a perfect tempest," observed the lady as I withdrew my head from the window. "How I love a sudden storm! There is something grand about the winds when fairly loose among the hills. I never encountered a night like this, but Byron's magnificent description of a thunder storm in

Jura, recurs to my mind. But are we on the mountain yet?"

"Yes, we have begun the ascent."

"Is it not said to be dangerous?"

"By no means, I replied, in as easy a tone as I could assume.  
"I only wish it was daylight so that we might enjoy the mountain scenery. But what's that?" and she covered her eyes from a sheet of lightning that illustrated the rugged mountain with brilliant intensity.

Peal after peal of thunder instantly succeeded; there was a heavy volume of rain coming down at each thunder burst, and with the deeper agony, breaking upon our ears, I found that the coach had come to a dead halt.

Louise, my beautiful fellow traveler became pale as ashes. She fixed her eyes on mine with a look of anxious dread, and turning to her father, she hurriedly remarked:

"We are on the mountains."

"I reckon we are," was the unconcerned reply.

With instinctive activity, I put my head through the window and called to the driver, but the only answer was the moaning of an animal, borne past me by the swift winds of the tempest. I seized the handle of the door and strained in vain—it would not yield. At that instant I felt a cold hand in mine, and heard Louise faintly articulate in my ear the following appalling words:

"The coach is moving backward."

Never shall I forget the fierce agony with which I tugged at the coach door, and called on the driver in tones that rivaled the fierce blast of the tempest. The conviction was bringing in my brain that the coach was being slowly moved backward!

What followed was of such swift occurrence, that it seems to me like a frightful dream.

I rushed against the door with all my force, but it withstood my utmost efforts. One side of our vehicle was sensibly going down, down, down. The moaning of the agonized animal became deeper, and I knew from his desperate plunges that it was one of our horses. Crash upon crash of thunder rolled over the mountain, and vivid flashes of lightning played over our heads. By its light I could see for a moment the old planter standing erect, with hands on his son and daughter, his eyes raised to heaven and his lips moving as in prayer. I could see Louise and her father cheek toward me as if imploring assistance; and I could see the bold glance of the boy flashing indignant defiance at the war of elements and the awful danger that awaited him. There was a roll, a desperate plunge, a harsh, grating jar, a sharp piercing scream of mortal terror, and I had but time to clasp Louise firmly with one hand around her waist, and seized the fastenings attached to the coach roof with the other, when we were precipitating over the precipice.

I can distinctly recollect preserving consciousness for a few seconds of time, how rapidly my breath was being exhausted but of that tremendous descent I soon lost all further knowledge by a concussion so violent that I was instantly deprived of sense and motion.  
The traveler paused. His features worked for a moment or two as they did when we were on the mountain; he passed his hands across his forehead as if in pain, and then resumed his thrilling narrative.

On a low couch in an humble room of a small country house, I next opened my eyes in this world of light and shade, my joy and sorrow, mirth and madness. Gentle hands soothed my pillow, gentle feet glided across my chamber, and a gentle voice for a time hushed all my questionings. I was kindly tended by a fair young girl of about sixteen, who refused for a while to hold any discourse with me. At length, one morning, finding myself sufficiently recovered to sit up, I insisted on knowing the result of the accident.

"You were discovered," said she, "sitting on a ledge of rocks amidst the branches of a shattered tree, clinging to the roof of your broken coach with one hand, and the insensible form of a lady with the other."  
"And the lady?" I gasped, scanning the girl's face with an earnestness that made her draw back and blush.

"She was saved, sir, by the means that saved you—a friendly tree."

"And her father and brother?" I impatiently demanded.

"We found both crushed to death at the bottom of the precipice, and we buried them in one

grave by the clover path down in our meadow."

"Poor Louise! poor orphan! God pity you!" I muttered in broken tones, utterly unconscious that I had a listener.

"God pity her indeed, sir said she, with a heart-felt sympathy. "Would you like to see her?" she added.

I found her bathed in tears for her kindred, and she received me with sorrowful sweetness of manner. I need not detain you by describing the efforts I made to soothe her grief, but briefly acquaint you that at last I succeeded, and twelve months after the dreadful occurrence which I have related, we stood at the altar man and wife. She still lives to bless me with her smiles, but on the anniversary of that terrible night she secludes herself in her room, and devotes the hours of darkness to solitary prayer.

"As for me," added the traveler, while a faint blush tinged his noble brow, "as for me, that accident has reduced me to the condition of a physical coward at the sight of a mountain precipice."

"But the driver," asked the lady passenger who had listened with much attention, "what became of the driver, and did you ever learn the reason of his deserting his post?"

"His body was found on the road, within a few steps of the place where the coach went over. He had been struck dead by the same flash of lightning that blinded the restive horses."

And thus ended this thrilling and remarkable story of life.

[From the Savannah News, July 25.]

## Sickening and Heart-rending Scene.

The most awful and appalling tragedy that has stirred the heart of any community in this section for many a year, if ever before, occurred in Edgingham county, about two miles above Station No. 24, on the Central Railroad about 3 o'clock yesterday morning.

Mrs. Ash, the wife of John H. Ash, formerly of this city, killed her three little children and afterwards committed suicide by administering a sufficient quantity of strychnine to produce almost instantaneous death.

It appears from what we could learn from a gentleman who was an eye witness to the horrifying scene, that Mrs. Ash, formerly Miss Laura Dasher, of Edgingham county, has for a short time past been slightly deranged, at least she was suspected of being in this condition from certain singular appearances and conduct noticeable to those nearest her and in most continuous association with her. However, nothing serious was apprehended, except that her husband felt a little anxious about her, and communicated with her brothers on the subject. This was all. No more serious apprehension was felt, although her husband continued to keep a strict watch over her conduct. A short time previous he had purchased a small bottle of strychnine for the purpose of destroying the rats and dogs that were rapidly killing off their poultry. This he secreted in the night time, taking the precaution to lock it up in an old bureau drawer, hiding the key in a place least likely to be discovered by his wife, no other person in the house knowing of the hiding place.

Sunday night all went to bed as usual, though before retiring Mrs. Ash sat down and wrote a long letter, to whom we could not ascertain, her husband read the letter but did not suspect anything, although it contained an account of her feelings towards certain members of her family, with whom there was some unpleasantness. Mr. Ash took all three of the children in bed with himself and his wife. Mr. George Patterson, a friend and relative of Mrs. Ash's, occupied an adjoining room.

About three o'clock, yesterday morning, he and Mr. Ash were aroused by the cries of two of the children, and entering the room, found Mrs. Ash in the act of taking a spoon from the mouth of the oldest child, a little girl, who had struggled and resisted until her cries woke her father and his friend, both of whom feeling alarmed, asked her what she was doing. She replied, "only giving the children a little powder, and I am afraid I have not given them enough."

They begged and entreated her to tell them what she had given them—Mr. Ash tasting the powder which he discovered on the mouth of one of the children, discovered that it was quite bitter. She finally took him to the bureau drawer and showed him the bottle of strychnine from which she had dosed herself first and then each one of her three little ones. It was but a short time after this be-

fore the mother, a young woman about twenty-five years old, and her three interesting little children, two girls and one boy, were lying stiff and cold in the arms of death. Dying in rapid succession, one after the other, the mother, although the first to take the poison, lived to see her children all die and then followed them herself. It is said the struggles of the poor little creatures were awful, the oldest falling backwards was drawn together in such a manner that her head and feet nearly touched each other. The afflicted father held his little ones and his wife in his arms till they breathed their last.

The time was too short from the discovery of the deed to procure any aid, although a physician was immediately sent for. He arrived in time to save the father, who, in his efforts to discover what the drug was, had swallowed enough to render his condition dangerous. Mr. Patterson came to this city yesterday afternoon to procure coffins to bury the dead, and as soon as he returns an inquest will be held previous to the interment.

[From the New York Tribune.]

## Caught by the Flames.

A HUNTER'S STORY—THE CONFLAGRATION IN THE MOUNTAINS.

Great fires have been raging lately in the forests in Sullivan, Ulster, Delaware counties in this State. The woodlands in the remote sections of the Shandaken Mountains were discovered in flames on May 18th. The underbrush, dry as tinder, was like a train of gunpowder, and the flames spread with extraordinary rapidity. The following home-spun description is from the lips of an eye witness:

"We were in Lintin' for bars when you know we just such places where there ain't nobody nor nuthin' to be a bother'n' on'em. When found a track, and were a feller in on't up Jim says to me, 'Bob, somethin's a burnin'! We had't tramped much further, before the smoke came pretty thick, in puffs, like. There wasn't a breath of air."

All at once there came cloud of smoke, like a blanket. It came right down and made the woods almost as dark as sunset, although it was only about two o'clock. Then came a shower of cinders. We got choked and blind ed. Some of the cinders came on our neck like so many needles stickin' into us. We were nigh to the top of the hills, and in a minute or so the smoke and cinders shifted another way, so we could see a bit. There never was such a sight! All about us, except one little streak along the eastward was in a blaze. We were both as black as Congo niggers. It was like the Atlantic Ocean choked full of kerosene and pine wood, all a fire at once. Well, on top of this mountain, a bit off below us, was a hollow, with steep rocks all around it. There was a spring and a brook there, and green grass. In that hollow, say about ten rods long and five wide, there were more than a Million of snakes—adders, moccasins, racers and black snakes—and wood chucks, squirrels, foxes and one b'ar.

They had all come there to get to the water away from the fire, but now the water was nearly all dried up, the ground baked, and the rocks around as hot as an oven. They were all walled in by the fire. There was no gettin' out. The b'ar laid down on his back and growled. His hair was scorched off and his hide was scorched. The foxes were burnt as bad and looked awful curious with their tails roasted. The most amusing thing of all was the snakes. Some of them were dead in heaps, all twisted up and burnt open; others were burnt crisp; and the rest squirming and wriggled like a heap of tangled ropes.

All this happened in less than half an hour. While we stood awaking at the sight, a gust of wind and hot cinders came on us. We choked and turned and turned around to get out. There was no time to lose. Only a narrow, dry raven was unburnt.—Down that we went, about two yards at each straddle, until we got to the bottom. We'll never forget that, stranger; and if hell is any hotter'n that we'll jine the meetin' next Sunday, sure!"

The whole of the Shandaken Mountains seemed to be on fire last Saturday night. In the vicinity of Menticello and Liberty Village, the fires extended for miles in several directions. Tens of thousands of acres of excellent woodland have been burned over, and the sands of cords of wood and bark have been destroyed.—The Methodist Chapel, the public school house, and other buildings

have been consumed at Black Lake. Wild rumors prevailed of other extensive losses of property, and, perhaps, of human life. The flames have surrounded several farms and dwellings on the distant mountain terraces, and fears are entertained as to safety of the families.

## A Singular Story—A Woman Asserts that she has been a Captive among Indians for Forty Years.

On Friday morning a woman named Martha Yallery arrived in Detroit, from the East, en route to St. Joseph, Mo., having come by sea from California, and by direction of the Director of the Poor, she was sent to the County House at Wayne, until her friends can be communicated with. She tells an extraordinary story, to which the Detroit Tribune alludes as follows:

She states that, together with her father and mother, she was captured by a body of Comanche Indians on the plains, in June, 1828, and that subsequently her parents purchased their liberty, and are at present residing in St. Joseph, Mo. From this time up to June, 1870, she remained a captive in the hands of savages, and was subjected to excruciating tortures and indignities. Upon arriving at a mature age, David Ward, an Irishman, who was also a captive, married her, first, however, being compelled to "run the gauntlet" in order to claim her as his wife. Three children were the result of this union.

Ward, for some offence, was burned at a stake, and afterward a young Indian "ran the gauntlet" for her, and she was married to him. He, too, perished by the hands of his fellow-savages, not, however, until six children had been born. After his death various indignities were proposed and rejected, and her three children were killed in her presence, and she was compelled to eat of their flesh and dance in their blood. Still refusing to accede to the propositions of her captors, she was consigned to death, and preparations were made to burn her at a stake on the 14th of June, 1870.

On the night of the 13th, however, she says she effected her escape, and after traveling thirteen days she found white friends, who cared for and assisted her in securing her liberty. During her journey she lived principally upon herbs, and was compelled to remain three days in a hollow log to prevent a recapture. While occupying this place of safety, her pursuers held a consultation in the neighborhood and decided to give up the chase. She overheard all that was said, and at nightfall she quitted the log and locality and continued on her journey.

The above is the substance of the woman's story as told to the Director of the Poor. She related most incidents connected with her captivity, many of which are of a revolting character. Her appearance indicates that she has lived with Indians, and of the truth of her statements we leave our readers to judge.

[From the Philadelphia Press.]

TEXAS TO BE DIVIDED INTO THREE STATES.—At the fall election in Texas the people are to decide upon the division of their State into three. The new States are to be called Eastern Texas, Middle Texas, and Western Texas. The names are not such as we should select. Distinct names for the two slices, east and west would seem preferable. But the name is a secondary affair. The present State has territory enough for three, but population is of less account than population. The proposed divisions are: Eastern Texas, all east of the Trinity river, population something over 340,000; Middle Texas, all between the Trinity and Colorado rivers; and Western Texas, all west of the Colorado.

The population of each of the two last is over 200,000; that of the Western division being the least. The population of the whole State as it now stands is a little over 800,000 (809,842) of whom 251,127 are colored, leaving the white population 558,715, but a trifle over half a million. The whites are in larger proportion to the blacks here, however, than in the other Gulf States, being over two to one. Whether the division will be voted or not cannot be predicted. It is said the Republicans are generally in favor of it, as they would probably gain two United States Senators, while the Democrats oppose it for the same reason. The division has long been contemplated; in fact, provisions were made for it in the treaty of annexation.

Why is love like a Scotch plaid? Because it is all stuff, and often crossed.

## A Moment of Horror.

For twenty-three years, old Jake Willard has cultivated the soil of Baldwin County, Alabama, and drawn therefrom a support for self and wife. He is childless. Not long ago, Jake left the house in search of a missing cow. His route led him through an old worn out patch of clay land, of about six acres in extent, in the centre of which was a well, twenty-five or thirty feet deep, that at some time probably, had furnished the inmates of a dilapidated house near by with water. In passing by this spot, an ill wind lifted Jake's "tile" from his head, and maliciously wafted it to the edge of the well, and in it tumbled.

Now Jake had practiced the virtue of economy, and he immediately set about recovering the lost hat. He ran to the well, and finding it was dry at the bottom, he uncoiled the rope which he had brought for the purpose of capturing the truant cow, and after several attempts to catch the hat with a noose, he concluded "to save time by going down into the well himself. To accomplish this, he made fast one end of the rope to a stump hard by, and was quickly on his way down the well.

It is a fact, of which Jake was no less oblivious than the reader hereof, that Ned Wells was in the dilapidated building aforesaid, and that an old blind horse with a bell on his neck, who had been turned out to die, was lazily grazing within a short distance of the well.

The devil himself or some other wicked spirit put it in Ned's cranium to have a little fun; so he quietly slipped up to the horse, and unbuckling the bell strap, approached with slow measured "ting-a-ling" the edge of the well.

"Dang that blind horse!" said Jake, "he's comin' this way sure, and hain't got no more sense than to fall in here. When, Ball?"

But the continued approach of the "ting-a-ling" said just as plainly as words that "Ball" wouldn't whoa. Besides Jake was at the bottom resting, before trying to "shin" it up the rope!

"Great Jerusalem!" said he, "the old cuss will be a top of me before I can say Jack Robinson. Whoa! dang you, whoa!"

Just then Ned drew up to the edge of the well, and with his foot kicked a little dirt into it.

"Oh! lord!" exclaimed Jake, falling upon his knees at the bottom. "I'm gone now, whoa! whoa! Ball! Oh, Lord have mercy on me."

Ned could hold in no longer, and fearful Jake might suffer from his fright, he revealed himself.

Probably Ned didn't make tracks with his heels from that well. Maybe Jake wasn't up to the top of it in short order; and you might think he didn't try every night for two weeks to get a shot with his rifle at Ned. Maybe not. I don't know. But I do know that if Jake finds out who sent you this, it will be the last squib you'll get.

## Hold Fast Below.

A party of Irishmen, once upon a time, contracted to clear a very deep well. Having none of the usual conveniences employed for such purposes, they were at a loss to get one of the party on a little ledge near the bottom to assist in the process of getting out water, mud, etc. At last Jimmy Phelan, a herculean fellow, proposed a plan which was considered just the thing.

It was this: Jimmy was to clasp his big fists around the windlass; then another of the party was to clamber down and hold on by his legs, and so on until the last man should be able to leap upon the ledge.

Being slightly corned with liquor, the party prepared for the descent, without stopping to contemplate the difficulties involved in the adventure.

With bared breast, and sleeves tucked up, big Jimmy seized the round portion of the windlass directly over the well and swung himself over. Another of the party crept down, Jimmy's body and grasped him by the boots.—After several more had followed suit, and the human chain began to stretch far into the well, Jimmy became alive to one great difficulty; the windlass did not afford him a good hold in the first place, and the weight was getting intolerable.

At last human sinew could stand it no longer, and Jimmy hailed the lower link in the chain with:

"Be jabbers, Pat, hold fast below till I spit on me hands."

Salting the action to the words, he

released his hold, when, of course, the whole party was precipitated to the bottom of the well. As luck would have it, there was more mud than water where the Iberians lit, and they wisely considered themselves particularly fortunate in escaping without actual loss of either life or limb.

We regret (says the Spartan) to announce the death of Colonel Meyer, in command of United States Cavalry at this post. Ever since he came into our midst his health has been such as to disable him from performing the duties which devolved upon him. Owing to the same cause the pleasures of a mutual acquaintance, which citizen and soldier both desired, were not enjoyed. The Colonel died of consumption, and but a day or two previous to his death, consented, under medical advice, to surrender his commission and return home.

But it was too late. The insatiable archer had marked him, and on the beautiful hills on which he encamped, he gave up the ghost. The procession of his grave, where funeral services were performed by the Rev. Mr. McCullough of the Episcopal Church, was large, and composed of citizens of all classes. The Colonel was greatly esteemed, his government being strict impartial.

WASHINGTON, July 22.

The United States Arsenal at the Navy Yard is burned. The loss was estimated at a million dollars. Supposed cause, spontaneous combustion.

It is now supposed the loss by the explosion at the arsenal to day is not more than \$200,000. In addition to artillery and cavalry equipments and general military stores, the museum is totally destroyed. This contained many war trophies, most of the arms of all nations, together with specimens of uniforms, forming a valuable collection. During the fire there were many explosions from shell and loaded muskets, but no one was thereby injured.

The Union Times says: We regret to state that all prospects for rain in this section have blown off, and we hear much anxiety expressed for the corn crop. A few weeks ago this crop gave promise of great abundance, but it is feared the present drought has cut it off very materially. The cotton, where the ground was deeply ploughed, looks well, but in shallow soil it begins to droop.

We learn that a disgraceful fight occurred last Sunday night at the upper negro church in this place, in which a number of men and boys engaged and one man was severely beaten.—The leaders of the row immediately absconded, and have not, as yet, been arrested, but every effort is on foot to bring them to justice.

[Union Times.]

THE BANKER COTTON STATE.—According to the latest returns of the Agricultural Bureau, published in the News on Saturday, South Carolina stands preeminent. Her cotton crop is four per cent. better than it was in July of last year, and is put down at 100 per cent., while North Carolina the only other State that shows an improvement over last year, is put down at 60 per cent. The rest exhibit a falling off more or less marked.

[Charleston News.]

A COMPANY has been formed in Laurens to explore the mineral resources of that county. It is supposed the Northern portion of Laurens abounds in gold. May it prove a golden harvest to the good people of old Laurens.

[Union Times.]

THE Orangeburg News says: Not only from every portion of our beloved county, but from all sections of the State, glad tidings of a happy season and high anticipation of a fruitful harvest, make joyful the tongues of the plow men husbandmen. We are glad to hear from every quarter of our country that the crops are in a more flourishing condition than has been the case for several years. The provision crop is also much larger than any probably since the war.

Tell me, angelic host, ye messengers of love, shall swindlers printers here below have no redress above? The shining angel band replied: "To us is knowledge given; delinquents on the printer's books can never enter Heaven."

BENJAMIN DISRAELI meditates a tour around the world, beginning with the United States.